

Applicant : Brandyn Webb, et al.  
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Filed : February 21, 2001  
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### REMARKS

Claims 1-39 are currently pending, of which claims 1, 16, 31, 35, 36 and 39 are independent. Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 16-25, 27, 28, and 31-38 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the action mailed November 18, 2005, is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

#### **35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections**

Claims 1, 9-12, 14, 16, 24-27, 29, 31, and 33 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,425,012 ("Trovato") in view of U.S. Patent 6,651,086 ("Manber").

Trovato places users in a common network based merely on the time the users access the network or on common characteristics between the users (e.g., party affiliation, geographic location, interests). In Manber, users select the chat room they wish to enter based on the topic being discussed in the particular chat room. Nothing in Trovato or Manber provides any disclosure of "determining whether an interactive relationship exists between a first user ... and a second user ..., *wherein an interactive relationship is determined to exist if the first user and the second user have had an online interaction with each other* prior to the first user entering the first forum" and "if an interactive relationship exists, placing the first user ... in a clone of the first forum based on the relationship" as recited in amended claim 1.

For at least these reasons, claim 1 and its dependents are allowable over Trovato and Manber.

The foregoing remarks also apply to independent claims 16, 31, and 33, which have corresponding limitations, and the claims that depend, directly and indirectly, from claims 16, 31, and 33.

Claims 2-8, 17-23, 32, 34, and 37-38 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato in view of Manber, and in further view of U.S. Patent 6,336,133 ("Morris").<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although the heading at page 14 fails to mention that claims 32 and 34 were rejected over Trovato in view of Manber and further in view of Morris, the examiner rejects these claims over these references at page 14.

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Claims 2-8 and claims 37-38 depend from claim 1. Claims 17-23 depend from claim 16. Claim 32 depends from claim 31. Claim 34 depends from claim 33 and claims. In Morris, a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Because Morris does not cure the deficiencies of Trovato and Manber, dependent claims 2-8, 17-23, 32, 34, and 37-38 are allowable for at least the reasons that apply to the independent claims from which they depend.

Claims 15 and 30 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato and Manber, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,888,731 ("Liles").

Claims 15 and 30 depend from independent claims 1 and 16, respectively. In Liles, a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Because Liles does not cure the deficiencies of Trovato and Manber, claims 15 and 30 are allowable for at least the same reasons that apply to claims 1 and 16.

Claims 35 and 36 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato in view of Liles and Morris.

As explained above, neither Liles nor Morris cures the deficiencies of Trovato. In particular, in neither Liles nor Morris is a user placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Thus, claims 35 and 36 are allowable for at least the same reasons that apply to claims 1 and 16.

#### **Conclusion**

The applicant respectfully requests that all pending claims be allowed.

By responding in the foregoing remarks only to particular positions taken by the examiner, the applicant does not acquiesce with other positions that have not been explicitly addressed. In addition, the applicant's arguments for the patentability of a claim should not be understood as implying that no other reasons for the patentability of that claim exist.

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Respectfully submitted,

Date: 1/6/06



Mandy Jubang  
Reg. No. 45,884

Customer No. 21876  
Telephone: (617) 542-5070  
Facsimile: (617) 542-8906

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